

# Assisted Living Advisor

A resource for assisted living providers serving low income seniors

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## ARE YOU PREPARING FOR SURVEY?

**I**s it really possible to "get ready" for an on-site monitoring visit when your program is due for recertification? Hopefully you answered "yes," and you already have a system in place to get ready for survey. Adequate preparation for survey often becomes a stumbling block for AL programs. Where do you begin?

Most regulatory insufficiencies (RIs) are paperwork related. Therefore, meeting the AL documentation requirements should be at the top of the priority list.

Below are samples of RIs received by an AL program. These RIs may have been prevented if the ALP had audited its files and documented efforts to correct the problem.

- *The tenant did not sign the occupancy agreement prior to move-in.*
- *A health, cognitive, and functional assessment were not completed within 30-days of occupancy.*
- *The health assessment was not timed.*
- *The service plan was not updated and did not have required signatures.*

- *A 90-day nurse review was not conducted for tenants receiving assistance with medications or health-related care.*

The program should periodically audit files to watch for such errors. A quality assurance (QA) tool should be developed when the program is not in compliance. The QA tool should indicate the noted area of concern, how the concern will be corrected, and who will be responsible for making the corrections and for ongoing compliance. All

-See "Survey," page 3-

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### Regulatory Reminder

Tenant service plans must be signed by a health care or human services professional, the tenant (and/or tenant's legal representative), and at least two other staff members involved in the care of the tenant.

The tenant should be deeply involved in the creation and updating of the service plan. Family members can be involved in the service planning process, at the tenant's request.

## ADEL ASSISTED LIVING OPENS

**S**eniors in the Adel area are already taking advantage of a new health care option. Adel Assisted Living, the sixth affordable AL program built under the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program, opened in January and has already accepted five clients. The 24-unit program, located at 504 Van Fossen Lane in Adel, is expected to fill very quickly.



### Partnership yields new option for Adel seniors

*l to r: Jim Rieker, Midwest Housing Equity Group; Dan Garrett, Iowa Equity Fund; Sam Erickson, Community Housing Initiatives; Darrell Bauman, Board of Directors, Adel Manor; Mary Bilstad, HomeCare Services, Inc.; Donna Davis, Iowa Finance Authority; and Sandy Ehrig, Department of Economic Development*

# CREATING A STELLAR ACTIVITY PROGRAM

**I**owa assisted living rules (IAC 321, Chapter 25.39) set forth essential elements to be included when developing an assisted living activities program. The activity programming should reflect individual differences in age, health status, sensory deficits, lifestyle, ethnic and cultural beliefs, religious beliefs, values, experiences, needs, interests, abilities and skills. Leisure activities are to be provided through a variety of types and levels of involvement.

Most programs are quite proficient in completing the leisure assessment. But what happens to that document once it's completed? Many times it is filed in the tenant's record and never referred to again. The leisure assessment should be the cornerstone around which any activity program that incorporates all the elements listed above is built.

It is helpful to create a master leisure assessment that can be used to tally the number of tenants who enjoy a specific activity. This is a critical piece in building an activity program that is appealing to a large number of tenants. If your tally sheet shows that 25 out of 30 clients enjoy one specific activity, then you would certainly want to provide plenty of opportunities to enjoy that activity. There may also be an activity that is

enjoyed by only a few clients. However, it is just as important to those clients that they be afforded the opportunity to partake in activities that are meaningful to them.

Another good way to ensure that your program is meeting the leisure needs of tenants is to spot-check attendance at key activities. Perhaps many clients indicated on their leisure intake assessment that they enjoy Bingo, so you offer that activity on a regular basis. You begin to see a decline in participation, but those tenants who still enjoy Bingo are resistant to changes in programming. You can make a case for decreasing the frequency of Bingo if you have documented the decreasing attendance.

It's always helpful to revisit the leisure assessment with tenants on an annual basis. They may be enjoying an activity that they did not indicate an interest in when they were first admitted.

If you are using the leisure assessment appropriately, the activity program should be very fluid, changing slightly with each new tenant that is admitted. The updated leisure assessments and feedback at tenant council are key tools in any effort to build an activity program that meets the unique needs and interests of tenants.

## Free activity programming tools

The Iowa Finance Authority website ([www.ifahome.com](http://www.ifahome.com)) provides the following resources free of charge to help programs build a stellar activity program.

- ✓ Sample social/recreational policy and procedure manual
- ✓ Leisure assessment tool
- ✓ Examples of how to document leisure interests on the service plan
- ✓ Suggestions on how to document attendance and determine if programming is meeting the needs of all tenants
- ✓ Guidelines for scheduling & conducting tenant council meetings

To access these free resources, access IFA's website at [www.ifahome.com](http://www.ifahome.com). From the menu on the left, choose "Senior Living," then "Affordable Assisted Living." Scroll down to the bottom of the affordable AL page to "Documents Available." Select "Affordable AL Policy Manual." Scroll to "Social/Recreational Manual."

The leisure assessment and volunteer assessment forms are found below the manual. Forms are copyright free and can be downloaded and customized free of charge.

## FREE TRAINING RESOURCES

**T**he Iowa Finance Authority is pleased to offer three free educational modules that can be used for staff training. The modules contain a participant manual, instructor guide, and pre- and post-tests. Each module can be delivered in approximately one hour. Topics include:

- Customer Service in AL
- AL Philosophy
- Telephone Etiquette & Marketing

The instructor guide contains notes to facilitate discussion specific to the AL program. The materials are copyright free and may be downloaded for photocopying. The modules can be found at [www.ifahome.com](http://www.ifahome.com); Senior Living; Affordable Assisted Living; Training Resources (at the bottom of the Affordable AL page).

# SMOKE DETECTORS SAVE LIVES



## LIFE SAFETY TIPS FOR AL PROVIDERS

Provided by  
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**A**ssisted Living facility fire alarm systems or automatic fire detectors are required to comply with NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm Code. The manual fire alarm system must be in accordance with Section 9.6 of NFPA 101, and the approved smoke alarms shall be provided in accordance with 9.6.2.10 of NFPA 101.

Supervision of the system controls and adequate maintenance is essential as smoke detectors serve as the first line of defense in a fire emergency. Smoke actually takes a resident's life before fire in most cases.

Maintaining the equipment is your best assurance that it will operate when needed to save resident and staff lives. Follow these recommendations:

- Use a vacuum to clean all smoke detectors every six months (see manufactures instructions prior to cleaning). Smoke detectors in mechanical or activity rooms should be cleaned more often.
- Never test smoke detectors with aerosol smoke because it will make the device less sensitive.
- Prior to changing back-up batteries every six months, be sure that you test them to ensure that they are fully charged. Then test each device.
- Test your communications system to ensure that it is clear and everyone understands what to do in an emergency.
- When performing a drill, be sure to alternate your choice of pull stations to be activated to ensure that all pull stations are tested for proper activation.
- Smoke detection notification appliances should be monitored by staff, and mechanical issues should be corrected immediately.
- Most assisted living facilities were constructed before carbon monoxide detectors were standard equipment on smoke detectors. At a minimum, carbon monoxide detectors should be located near all gas-fired appliances, and residents and staff should be informed about what to do if they activate.

## SURVEY (from page 1)

QA tools should be kept in a readily available file. The Department of Inspections and Appeals will usually not cite a program if the concern was identified and corrected prior to survey. However, if the area of concern is not corrected via the QA tool, programs should expect to receive an RI.

Below are guidelines to assist you in preparing for a successful on-site visit.

### One year from recertification

- \_\_\_ Review and update staff delegation
- \_\_\_ Review tenant charts
- \_\_\_ Review medication administration policy
- \_\_\_ Provide annual inservice training on food protection
- \_\_\_ Annual systems inspection (heating, cooling, electrical, etc.)
- \_\_\_ Review fire drills
- \_\_\_ Review employee files (criminal background and dependent adult abuse checks and training documentation)

### Six months from recertification

- \_\_\_ Review and update staff delegation
- \_\_\_ Review tenant charts
- \_\_\_ Review medication administration policy
- \_\_\_ Provide inservice to all staff on emergency policies/procedures
- \_\_\_ Review/update policies and procedures
- \_\_\_ Conduct an environmental/safety walk-through
- \_\_\_ Review and complete the application materials from DIA
- \_\_\_ Make sure the nurse designee is PREPARED for the monitor

The application for recertification can be used as both a checklist to ensure survey preparedness and a tool to educate staff on AL program requirements.

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## FIRE SAFETY TIPS

- ✓ **Most assisted living facilities should replace their emergency lighting devices with new batteries to ensure proper operation and emergency lighting duration.**
- ✓ **File the required annual inspection of fire alarm systems in an area that will be easily retrievable at the time of recertification (i.e., compliance file or binder).**

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*The Iowa Finance Authority is committed to providing opportunities for individuals and organizations to expand housing opportunities to low and moderate income families and individuals. Jenny Knust, Affordable Assisted Living Coordinator, serves as a technical advisor to programs seeking to serve low to moderate income seniors in the assisted living environment. The position is funded by a grant from the US Department of Agriculture, Rural Community Development Initiative. This publication is designed to serve as a resource for RCDI grant recipient organizations and others who are developing and/or managing affordable assisted living programs.*

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Visit our website at  
[www.ifahome.com](http://www.ifahome.com)  
(look under "Senior Living," and  
"Affordable Assisted Living")

## EDUCATION IS ESSENTIAL

### AL management certification course offered by ICAL

**R**egulatory compliance, marketing, customer service, and life safety issues are but a few of the many issues that directors must address every day in order to operate a quality assisted living program. But many times it is difficult to find educational courses designed to improve knowledge and skills in these areas.

The Iowa Center for Assisted Living (ICAL) has developed a 40-hour continuing education course designed to define excellence in assisted living administration. The focus of the course is to identify the essential components of a well-balance assisted living program. It is designed to prepare participants for developing services and procedures that reflect assisted living values and compliance with certification rules.

The two part-course covers such topics as:

- AL philosophy & trends
- Personnel management

- Health services in a social model
- Nutrition & food handling
- Activities
- Budgeting
- Customer Service
- Marketing
- Resident rights
- Serving clients with dementia
- Mental illness
- Crisis planning
- Hospice in AL
- HCBS waiver
- Life safety
- OSHA
- AL regulatory compliance

AL faculty members are chosen for their expertise and knowledge to ensure that the program is stimulating and challenging.

The program is approved for 40 hours of CEU credit for nursing home administrators and 4.8 CEUs for nurses. It meets the 40-hour core

of knowledge relevant to assisted living administration management requirements for the American College of Health Care Administrators. Participants may also qualify for college credits through the Des Moines Area Community College.

The two-year certification, granted after completion of the course and a score of 85 percent or higher on the post-test, can be renewed by obtaining 10 CEUs in the field of assisted living per year from ICAL.

The course, separated into two three-days sessions, will be held February 22, 23 and 23, and March 14, 15, and 16 at the ICAL office at 6750 Westown Parkway in West Des Moines.

Participants can register for the course by calling Georgene Olson at ICAL at 800-422-3106. Seating is limited, and registrations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.